SERVICE-LEARNING STRATEGIES: Idaho's Practical Guide to Service-Learning

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Dear Reader:

We are pleased to share a new service-learning tool: *Service-Learning Strategies: Idaho's Practical Guide to Service-Learning*. This is an excellent guide for school district administrators and teachers as they create or improve their service-learning program, regardless of their previous experience in service-learning. Students make a tremendous difference in their schools and communities when they are given the opportunity to use their enthusiasm, energy and ideas to solve problems and contribute to the common good.

The Idaho State Department of Education affirms research studies that link service-learning with better academic outcomes, student retention, career exploration, and the development of skills related to social and civic responsibility. Learn & Serve Idaho recognizes service-learning has positive effects that contribute to healthy and productive schools and communities.

It is our hope that this manual will be used to strengthen district-level infrastructure in order to support quality service-learning experiences for our learners. One of our goals is to develop appropriate models of service-learning for schools that are aligned with state-mandated educational standards and benchmarks. We are confident this manual will be a necessary step in that direction.

We want to thank the service-learning leaders from around Idaho who are an inspiration and model to young people across the state. Thank you for supporting high-quality, school-based service-learning.

Sincerely,

Tom Luna
State Superintendent Public Instruction

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CHAPTER I - Introduction

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What is service-learning?

Service-learning is a teaching and learning approach that integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Service-learning is used at all levels of education and covers a wide range of academic disciplines.

Service-learning builds upon community service, but it is clearly distinguished from community service in several important respects. Quality service-learning includes **strong curricular connections** and **ongoing opportunities for students to reflect upon service experiences.**

What is Service Learning?

Service is picking up trash along a river bank.

Learning is sitting in a science classroom, looking at water samples under a microscope.

Service Learning is science students meeting academic standards by taking samples from local water sources, then analyzing the samples, documenting the results, presenting the scientific information to a pollution control agency and reflecting on the impact these results may have on future pollution control issues and our own behaviors and attitudes.

Courtesy of the National Youth Leadership Council

To ensure best practice in all service-learning experiences, Idaho has embraced the following eight service-learning standards. These standards underwent a year-long process of national reactor panels, the same standards-setting process that has been used to develop content standards throughout the states. They are derived from the book, *"K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice" (S. Billig, and W. Weah. 2008).*   See Chapter 3, p. 61.

K-12 Standards for Quality Service-Learning Practice

> *Meaningful Service*: Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.

> *Link to Curriculum*: Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or Idaho content standards.

> *Reflection*: Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's society.

> *Diversity*: Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.

> *Youth Voice*: Service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults.

> *Partnerships*: Service-learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.

> *Progress Monitoring*: Service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals, and uses results for improvement and sustainability.

> *Duration and Intensity*: Service-learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes

Service-learning is several things:

➢ A ***philosophy*** that young people are a great community resource and that it is the community's responsibility to help young people become democratic citizens who can contribute knowledgeably to community life.

➢ An ***education reform model*** that creates school and community partnerships. These partnerships both improve academic learning and help create safe and civil learning environments in and out of school.

➢ A form of ***contextual learning*** that bridges academics and citizenship. Students practice civic skills by applying what they have learned in school to real community needs. Service to the community is combined with in-depth student learning in a way that can really benefit students, schools and communities

High-quality service-learning programs match students in meaningful activities that are based on authentic community needs. These programs are as diverse as the communities they serve, and their scope can involve classrooms, entire schools or organize the work of whole school districts.

When service-learning is adopted as a school-level strategy, it strengthens the efforts of individual teachers. This is partially because of the rich opportunities it provides for interdisciplinary work. With a team of teachers implementing a project, it is possible to address multiple content standards in an integrated, real-world manner. Service-learning projects can address activities in math, science, language arts, civics and other content areas.

When it is adopted at the district level, service-learning can foster a whole new set of cross-age work-- utilizing high school students to tutor or mentor middle and elementary school students, for instance. A district wide approach also can allow more district resources to be leveraged in support of service-learning. District wide in-services might be offered, or a district could adjust the master schedule to allow longer blocks of time for project-based learning.

Service-learning can be used to enhance a particular discipline such as mathematics, writing, reading, social science and language. Well-designed service-learning activities can deepen learning and foster higher-order thinking skills by providing students with opportunities to apply their learning to a challenging situation or problem in their community.

The table on the next page illustrates different ways in which service-learning can be integrated into school and district culture, and the resources required. Service-learning's uses range from single units in individual classrooms to an overarching expectation in school culture. Service-learning also can be used to support extracurricular and co-curricular activities.

Integrated Service-learning

Approach	Description	Resources Needed
Classroom-based	Service-learning is a part of learning in a particular classroom. The focus is on one or a few subjects, a teaching unit or a unit activity. When service-learning occurs in several different classrooms, classes may work individually or collaborate on projects, with each class taking on a different role.	• Trained teachers in service-learning methods • Project support for logistics and coordination
School-wide, curriculum-based	Service-learning is an intentionally planned part of the whole school curriculum. All teachers use service-learning as one of several teaching methods. There is a scope and sequence for service-learning that is integrated and aligned with the scope and sequence for all subject matter taught at the school.	• Adequate planning time for teachers and others involved • Tools and resources
Part of school and district culture	Service-learning is a common expectation for all school participants - students, teachers, administrators, etc. "It is just what we do" is the way it is described. The notion of serving the community while applying academic knowledge is simply a natural part of completing the learning process.	• Administrative support • Policy support • Public Support
Student activities-based	Service-learning exists in opportunities for extra-curricular activities, student clubs, etc. The mechanisms to support student-initiated projects of small groups or individuals are generally outside the purview of classroom learning. Support Is provided to help these students and/or small groups make relevant connections to their classroom subject matter.	
As a "targeted" strategy	Service-learning is used as a specific strategy to target various school needs and priorities. Such priorities might include drop-out prevention, literacy, character education, etc.	

Ideally, service-learning is a collaborative effort involving community members, educators and students. To improve the quality of service-learning implementation, it is important for the **community, the school and district, the classroom and youth** to organize and create meaningful experiences.

Snapshots of Service-Learning in Action

The Alameda Center – New Horizons High School, Pocatello, ID. At-risk students at this alternative school were given the chance, through their Alameda Bike Club project, to see that they can play an important part in contributing to the community. The students, in the basement of their school, set up a bicycle repair shop to fix bikes for needy individuals, as well as build "green bikes" that are loaned free of charge to bike riders on the Portneuf Greenway. In addition to learning marketable bike repair skills, these students have extended the Kraft Hill Trailhead section of the Portneuf Greenway that follows the Portneuf River through Pocatello. They designed the quarter-of-a-mile scenic loop path, cleared the site, dug the trail and laid down bark mulched from surrounding brush. Based on internet research, the students are in the process of creating sign posts with geologic information about the Bonneville Flood that changed this area. The student's goals are to include bike racks and picnic benches along this section of the Greenway that can be enjoyed by families throughout the community. New Horizons partners with The Greater Pocatello Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Portneuf River Greenway Foundation to provide community support and oversight of the Green Bikes and trail head.

ANSER Public Charter School, Boise, ID participated in 28 different modules related to serving their community. One of their guiding questions was: "*What is compassion"?* One of the modules included the Community Café: The students in this module prepared food and helped set the table for the meals served at the Baltes Café. They also experienced shopping at Albertson's on a food stamp budget. They served the many guests who came in for lunch at the Baltes Café. They learned that the Baltes Café offers nourishment, dignity and privacy. They always use real china and silverware to make each meal special. The students also learned about the community effort to help fight hunger, which included volunteer projects at the Food Bank, and Life's Kitchen, an El-Ada Food Panty.

What does the research say about service-learning?

A national study of Learn and Serve America programs (Melchior and Bailis 2002) link service-learning with better academic outcomes, student retention, career exploration, and the development of skills related to social and civic responsibility. Whether the goal is academic improvement, personal development, or both, service-learning can help students learn critical thinking, communication, teamwork, civic responsibility, mathematical reasoning, problem solving, public speaking, vocational skills, computer skills, scientific method, research skills, and analysis. And because service-learning makes a positive contribution to communities as well, it has become an increasingly prized pedagogy.

Other benefits of service-learning

In addition to studies showing links to improved achievement, research clearly shows that service-learning has other positive effects that contribute to healthy and productive schools and communities. Well-implemented service-learning fosters benefits for young people, their families, educational institutions, and community organizations. When teachers are rigorous about partnering with young people to design and carry out service-learning projects that are tied to curricular objectives and standards, they are likely to benefit in the following ways:

> **Service-learning is a way to stop the rising tide of dropouts.** Service-learning is shown to increase school attendance and engagement of students (A Report by Civic Enterprises, "Engaged for Success", 2008).

> **Student social and civic responsibility is heightened through participation in service-learning.** These students are more aware of community needs, committed to the idea of service, cognizant of political issues and capable of effecting social change than non-participants (Melchior 1999; Berkas 1997; Yates and Youniss 1996; Stephens 1995).

> **Student self-esteem and confidence** are enhanced through service-learning's connections to peers, teachers, school and community. Students in service-learning programs have fewer behavioral problems and are less likely to engage in risky

In Brief…

The emerging picture from the research on service-learning is students are:

> **More academically proficient**
> **More motivated to learn**
> **More committed to civic participation**

They are more tolerant of themselves and others, and possess a strong sense of connection to their schools and communities.

Studies show they believe they can make a lasting and positive difference in the world and know the steps involved in doing so.

behavior than students in traditional programs (Stephens 1995; Yates and Youniss 1996; Follman 1998; Allen, Kuperminc, Philliber and Herre 1994).

➢ **Positive relationships between students and adults** are enhanced through service-learning activities (Morgan and Streb 1999). Healthy school environments result from the trust that service-learning programs can build between students and teachers. This means **preventing school violence** is an easier task when good service-learning programs are part of the equation (Education Commission of the States 1999).

➢ **Acceptance of cultural diversity:** Service-learning cultivates sensitivity and a corresponding acceptance of cultural diversity, especially when students have responsibility for all steps involved in projects, from planning through assessing the project's impact (Melchior 1999; Berkas 1997; Stephens 1995; Billig 2000a: Billig 2000b).

➢ **Student civic engagement** over time is enhanced through participation. Students who participate in high school service-learning are more likely to vote and be engaged in community organizations than students without service-learning (Youniss, McClellan and Yates 1997: Yates and Youniss 1998).

➢ **Career preparedness** is linked to service-learning experiences. Participating students acquire better job skills than non-participants. They also have more positive attitudes toward work.

➢ **Public engagement in education** improves as partners in service projects become more involved in schools and more open to direct, purposeful contact with young people.

How does service-learning support high performance?

Research indicates that good service-learning programs have a positive effect on a number of factors related to student achievement. It is useful to examine the research on high-performing schools/districts to understand more about how service-learning programs can help build high-performing systems.

In high-performing schools, teachers empowered students to become excited about and responsible for their own learning (Blase & Blase, 1994). Schools are typically considered high performing for the following reasons:

> ➢ They have high test scores on state and local assessments.
> ➢ They have high rates of student attendance, engagement and graduation.
> ➢ They have low dropout and high retention rates.
> ➢ They have high quality of teaching, learning and instruction.
> ➢ They have "special programs" such as art, music and theater.
> ➢ They have a high satisfaction rate with the community.

Five Core Elements of High Performing Schools

Researchers have identified five core elements associated with high-performing schools. To improve school performance, it is important to have a shared understanding of how these elements work together in your own environment.

1. **Student-centered learning**
   This approach recognizes learning as **constructed, social, situated and context specific**. Each learner brings individual resources to the process of building his or her knowledge and understanding (Wilson and Peterson 1997). In high-performing schools, instruction is more student-centered (in which the student seeks solutions to problems without complete dependency upon an instructor) than teacher-centered (characterized by techniques such as teacher lecture and low-level cognitive tasks such as memorizing) (Scribner and Scribner 2001).

2. **Learning-centered teaching**

   The **teacher's role is that of a coach**. He or she learns to inquire into students' learning processes (Wilson and Peterson 1997). Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2005) write, "Students learn best when faced by genuine challenges, choices, and responsibility in their own learning".

3. **Vision-based, collaborative leadership**

In high-performing schools, the central vision gives student learning the very highest priority   (Clayton and Gomez 2001). The vision is widely shared, with different stakeholders understanding their roles in achieving it. Research has shown that the most promising strategy for helping all students learn at high levels is to develop a staff's capacity to function as a professional learning community (PLC) (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker & Many 2006). A PLC is composed of collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve common goals linked to the purpose of learning for all students.

4. **Collaborative learning and professional development**

The effectiveness of professional development must be evaluated in relation to impact on **student learning** and improvement of teaching performance, not just documented levels of participant satisfaction (Guskey, 2000). Teachers are provided supports (such as common planning time and adequate in-service time) to work collaboratively around problems of practice. Staff development resources are used to provide feedback on strengths and weaknesses in school and student performance, and strategies for improvement (Little 1997). Testing and high standards for student performance require students to have a capacity for complex and collaborative problem solving skills. **Facilitating learning requires much more of educators** than teaching by telling; consequently, teachers are required to develop deeper knowledge and new skills (Shannon and Bylsma 2007).

5. **Meaningful school, family and community partnerships**

The education of students is the **shared responsibility** of all stakeholders (teachers, school staff, families, businesses and the community) as well as students themselves. Partnerships promote the vision of families, schools and communities working together to support the achievement of all students. School-parent relationships are respectful of family cultural values, based on personal contact, foster communication and entail a welcoming environment for parents (Scribner and Scribner 2001).

Service-learning as Part of the Core Elements of High Performing Schools

Service-learning is a strategy you can use to help create high-performing schools. A review of research indicates that high quality service-learning, because of its utilization of effective, experiential learning strategies, can enhance academic outcomes in such content areas as reading, writing, mathematics, and science. A variety of studies have shown evidence of a range of achievement-related benefits from service-learning, including improved attendance, higher grade point averages, enhanced preparation for the workforce, enhanced awareness and understanding of social issues, greater motivation for learning, and heightened engagement in prosocial behaviors (Furco 2007). These conditions are directly related to the five elements of high performance. Here is a table showing specific common points between the research on service-learning and the research on high-performing schools and systems.

**Service-learning programs
And
High-performing schools and districts**

Both are characterized by…

➢ High student motivation to learn and school engagement

➢ Positive and caring relationships among students - and between students and teachers

➢ Collaboration among teachers

➢ Leadership development for students, teachers, administrators and community members

➢ Positive parent-community relations

➢ Positive school-community relations and active partnership development

➢ Positive community perceptions about students, teachers and schools - and support for those students, teachers and schools.

The multiple positive effects of service-learning can spark a sense of renewal throughout the school, in the community, and among students, teachers and other stakeholders. It can lead to a new sense of unity and purpose – a key element in high-performing schools (Billig 2000a; Billig 200b).

Further, good service-learning practice can help to sustain each of the core elements of high-performing schools. For a detailed analysis of service-learning practices linked to each element, please see the following table.

Element of high-performing schools	What Service-Learning Does
1. Student-centered learning	• Centers on a community problem or social issue that students care about. • Helps students experience the relevance of the subject matter because content is used in solving real problems. • Students realize the importance of their efforts and care about the outcome, so are more motivated to achieve success. • Honors students as key decision makers in community projects or activities, empowers them and fosters responsibility for learning. • Provides reflection opportunities to help students understand what they have learned and to replicate applications for their learning. • Solves community problems using knowledge and skills, such as computation, reading research or writing, and promotes cooperative learning, teamwork and problem-solving. • Facilitates rich discussions about the meaning of service, citizenship, civic institution, character and other desired goals, which help students develop strong character and civic responsibility. • Permits targeting" service activities of interest to students to meet their specific academic needs – to help address and overcome learning gaps among particular groups of students.
2. Learning-centered teaching	• Empowers students to make decisions, plan projects, identify learning relationships, reflect and evaluate their own success. • Encourages the role of the teacher as a "coach" for learning. • Enables teachers to participate in a role of learner along with students, and helps foster collaborative and positive relations between teachers and students. • Instruction and curriculum planning are more flexible and attuned to real-life situations, helping encourage teachers to become master of instructional methodology. Capable of tailoring learning opportunities for individual students as appropriate. • Focuses on students' interests relative to the surrounding community, which helps teachers better understand their students, their families and the surrounding community in which they teach.
3. Vision-based, collaborative leadership	• Builds a unified sense of purpose among students, staff and community, thus building a shared vision and mission. • Demonstrates continued and repeated success with "hard to reach" students, so helps stakeholders believe that

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	achieving their shared vision is possible. • Engages all school stakeholders in projects or activities and helps foster a sense of collaborative leadership within the school, developing new school leaders. • Orients student and school learning toward community issues and concerns, which helps with navigating local politics, developing a clear direction and building a base of community support.
4. Collaborative professional learning and development.	• Encourages collaborative planning, curriculum and professional development among teachers. • Opens new possibilities for multidisciplinary learning within community-based projects and activities, fosters collaboration among teachers, students and others within the school. • Fosters an environment for student leadership and student responsibility for learning, which helps lessen teacher attention on management and re-orients teachers to specific and effective instructional strategies that can serve individual students' needs.
5. Meaningful school-family-community partnerships	• Enables students to work with agencies to solve community problems as part of their learning and helps promote positive community relations. • Helps establish an environment in which parents feel more comfortable participating in learning activities than they do during traditional classroom instruction time. • Encourages diverse forms of community-based parent or family involvement, and helps strengthen connections between the school and family, providing common basis of support for parents to strengthen learning at home. • Creates the opportunity for an ongoing positive youth presence in the community and helps foster the community's improved perceptions of youth and the school. This can lead to increased public support for school programs, policies and funding proposals.

How does service-learning support accountability?

Standardized tests are becoming increasingly important in states across America as they are typically seen as a way to introduce responsibility into the educational system. More than ever, educators are held accountable for student achievement. Principals are responsible for insuring that their schools perform at a minimum standard, teachers are responsible for insuring that their students' performance increases, and students are responsible for meeting a minimum competency standard.

According to Dr. Shelley Billig, Vice President of RMC Research Corporation, research shows that **connecting service-learning to curriculum and standards** is critical for students to perform better on state assessments. Unfortunately, in some cases, this connection does not happen often enough. She states, "When service-learning inquiry and action are not integrated into core academic curriculum aligned with standards, students may still benefit in many ways, but what they have learned may not show up on important accountability measures. In this age of No Child Left Behind, many educators would like to see the impact of students' service-learning participation reflected in their test scores, and this is not so difficult if these experiences are connected to curriculum standards."

A number of studies have been conducted showing promising results of the academic impact of service-learning. Students who participated in high quality service-learning were found to have scored higher than nonparticipating students in several studies, particularly in social studies, writing, and English/language arts. They were found to be more cognitively engaged and more motivated to learn. Studies show great promise for service-learning as an avenue for increasing achievement among alternative school students and other students considered at risk of school failure.

As important as the standards are in rethinking *what* students learn, service-learning provides important ways for schools and communities to rethink *how* students learn. Because service-learning actively engages students' participation and taps into their many different intelligences, it is a very effective strategy for engaging students and connecting them to school. Schools typically focus on two types of intelligences: verbal and logical/mathematical. Students who are musically, spatially, kinesthetically, interpersonally, intrapersonally, or naturalistically intelligent excel in service-learning activities when their strengths are afforded opportunities to show themselves. Students who do not learn well through traditional methods may thrive in service-learning settings, because they have the opportunity to learn through a variety of modalities. For example, after having delivered meals to shut-ins, a student who had had difficulty writing essays would have much more emotional content to draw from and be more likely to write successfully.

State-level education policies support service-learning as an instructional strategy in Idaho - for several reasons.

1. **Idaho school districts enjoy a great deal of *autonomy*.** Idaho's state constitution gives local school boards the authority to make most decisions about curriculum and instruction. This means schools and districts have the prerogative to determine when and if instructional strategies such as service-learning are appropriate for their own local communities.

2. **Idaho's academic standards focus on what students know and *are able to do*.** When service-learning is used as a teaching and learning method, it can address virtually any of the standards — and its power is it focuses on application of knowledge. The emphasis of Idaho's standards is on what students can do and not just what they know, so service-learning provides an especially good strategy for meeting Idaho's standards.

3. **Idaho's state assessment system *has open-ended items*.** The ISAT augments multiple-choice questions with constructed-response items. On some mathematics items, for example, students must both calculate an answer and explain how they arrived at their answer. Service-learning projects, in which students must explain why they choose a particular solution to a community problem, can help students develop the skills to address open-ended test questions (See table on page 18 connecting service-learning and the ISAT).

Further, an important indicator of school and district quality is "contextual learning". It has been shown that students learn more effectively within an environment-based context than within a traditional educational framework. By providing a comprehensive educational framework, instead of traditional compartmentalized approaches, environment-based context appears to significantly improve student performance in reading, writing, math, science and social studies, and enriches the overall school experience (Lieberman & Hoody, 1998). They go on to explain that the term "environment" is used to identify a school's surroundings and community as a framework within which students can construct their own learning, guided by teachers and administrators using proven educational practices. Service-learning is an example of contextual learning.

Given the clear connections between what we know service-learning does for schools and students, and what research indicates is needed for improving school performance, there is strong support for using service-learning as a strategy for improving school and student performance.

For example:

➢ **At the classroom level,** service-learning activities based on content standards can provide students with authentic opportunities to apply their learning to real

community needs. They also can include the community as an integral part of the learning process. The beauty of service-learning is that something real and concrete is occurring. Learning takes on a new dimension.

➢ **At the school level**, service-learning activities can be part of a strategy for meeting school-improvement goals, including better student performance on the ISAT, improved attendance and increased parent involvement. They also foster community partnerships and a safe, civil learning environment.

➢ **At the district level**, service-learning programs that support the district's academic standards and meet state accreditation requirements can help develop better relationships with the local community, while also supporting staff development and citizenship education.

Connecting Service-Learning and the ISAT

Here are some suggested reflection activities that support and reinforce ISAT skills. While introducing these activities, it would be helpful to be explicit with your students about the activity and its connection to the ISAT.

1. **Putting things in sequential order:** Students take the elements of a story and arrange them in sequential order.

   Possible activities: Put Earth Force's Community Action and Problem Solving Process in sequential order. List out all the things that need to happen in order to make your project successful. Create a list of the things that they need to do and then create a sequential timeline.

2. **Statement of Problem and Solution:** Students are able to identify the problem in the story and how it was resolved.

   Possible activities: Ask students to talk about the problem that they were addressing and the solution that they came up with for their service-learning project.

3. **Similarities and Differences:** Identifying the similarities and differences between people, places, and things in a story.

   Possible Activities: Ask students to reflect on how their service project was similar and different than what they expected. How was your elder partner similar and different from other elders that you know?

4. **The Characteristics of a Character:** Students choose one character in the story that is interesting to them, state what the person says or does, and then choose one word to describe the person.

   Possible Activities: Students could choose one person that they worked with in the community and do the same type of activity.

5. **Making Predictions and Providing** Support: Student predicts what is going to happen in the story and provides support for her/his prediction.

   Possible Activities: Students could be making predictions throughout the service-learning project.

6. **Writing a Story:** Students write a story using the writer's checklist.

   Activity: Students could write a story about their service-learning experience using characters, setting, and story events.

7. **Describing a person, place or thing:** Students list facts from a story that demonstrate the characteristics of a person, place, or thing in the story.
   Activity: Take an element from your service-learning project and have students practice this skill. For example, list two examples of what makes a xeriscape garden.

A snapshot of standards-based service-learning in action

In 2003, the Poudre Valley School Board, in Colorado, issued a formal resolution in support of standards-based service-learning. The resolution is reproduced in the box below. This resolution can serve as a useful model for Idaho school districts that wish to implement service-learning in an accountable manner.

Resolution of the Poudre School District Board of Education, March 24, 2003

WHEREAS, service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that connects youths to their school and communities by encouraging development and application of knowledge and skills through challenging tasks that meet real community needs while addressing academic content standards; and

WHEREAS, service-learning is a vehicle for delivering the standards-based curriculum in ways students find relevant and meaningful, motivates students to learn; and

WHEREAS, infusing service-learning instructional formats as an integral component of curriculum improves critical thinking, communication and planning skills, and helps students develop a strong sense of personal and social responsibility while enhancing instruction; and

WHEREAS, through service-learning experiences students begin to develop the kind of character values and skills that meet our communities' high expectations of public education, including knowledge of civics, government, and history; and

WHEREAS, service-learning has been shown to result in positive impacts on students' engagement in school community life, increases in academic achievement, increases in graduation rates, and enhanced youth civic responsibility and ethic of caring, and decreases in violent behaviors, and

WHEREAS, service-learning advances the District's mission to provide a safe learning environment while challenging all students to achieve the knowledge, skills and commitment to be fulfilled, productive members of society;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we. the Poudre School District Board of Education, hereby declare our support for service-learning as an integral strategy for meeting the educational goals of every school in the district and, we encourage the development of ongoing professional training, collaborative planning, leadership development among teachers and others, and strong administrative support of a district policy framework necessary to create and sustain a service-learning culture within the district and the community it serves.

Service-learning is a strategy that can be used as states and districts work to comply with the provisions of the 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. For a summary of how service-learning relates to different sections of this legislation and a link to other more detailed resources, please reference Chapter 3, p. 57.

Here are three frequently asked questions about standards, accountability and service-learning.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I develop a service-learning curriculum that aligns with standards?

- ➢ Examine your current curricula and find areas that fit well with service-learning, using service-learning strategies where they make the most sense.
- ➢ Make sure everyone involved in developing curriculum has a basic understanding of the subject area and all appropriate teaching strategies, including service-learning.
- ➢ Implement service-learning gradually. Allow time for students to get used to the curriculum and learn from their discoveries. You will find that students learn much more by doing than by reading and studying alone.

How can I justify spending time on service-learning when I have so many content standards to cover?

- ➢ Learning is more profound when students are required to apply what they have learned to real-world situations (as in service-learning programs) than when many standards have been covered, often on a superficial level.
- ➢ Teachers can teach to multiple content standards through one service-learning experience.

Since the ISAT results are so important, aren't students better off staying in the classroom?

- ➢ Many of the ISAT items are performance-based, which means students need to apply their knowledge and explain their reasoning. These are skills that service-learning promotes.
- ➢ Educational outcomes other than ISAT scores are also important. Real-life learning experiences prepare students not only academically, but also socially for the world of work.

How can service-learning encourage good citizenship?

Americans, for more than 250 years, have shared a vision of a democracy in which all citizens understand, appreciate and engage actively in civic and political life. Unfortunately, there has been a recent trend where increasing numbers of Americans have disengaged from civic and political institutions. This has affected activities such as voting and being informed about public issues. Young people reflect these trends as they are less likely to vote and are less interested in political discussion and public issues than their older counterparts or young people of past decades.

According to a national report, titled *"The Civic Mission of Schools"* (Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, and Carnegie Corporation of New York), American schools today offer far fewer opportunities for students to learn about their roles as citizens in a democracy than students received three decades ago. This report called for schools to reengage in preparing students for effective, principled citizenship. According to the report, limited budgets, fear of criticism or litigation among teachers for addressing controversial issues, and an increased emphasis on testing and accountability have contributed to this decline. At the same time, civic engagement has declined significantly among young people since the right to vote was given to 18-year-olds in the early 1970s. The report offers six promising strategies to reinvigorate civic education, including service-learning:

> ➤ Provide instruction in government, history, law and democracy

> ➤ Incorporate discussion of current local, national and international issues and events in the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives

> ➤ **Provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction**

> ➤ Offer extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities

> ➤ Encourage student participation in school governance

> ➤ Encourage student participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures.

Through the Idaho Content Standards for Social Studies - Civics/Government, the opportunity exists for districts to use service-learning to help students understand how government works and how important public policy decisions are made. In most civics courses, students learn about the structure of government, principles of democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. But civics also should provide students with opportunities to learn how government provides services that meet citizens' needs, how citizens (including students) can influence the decisions public officials

make, and how they can take action when existing public policies do not meet citizens' needs. Service-learning is an ideal strategy for teaching these concepts.

Civics and social change can be a key to achieving real depth in service-learning by driving students to investigate public policy, question the world around them, and encourage their peers to become active in the civic process. Service-learning can take action with students raising community awareness through letters to the editor, making public service announcements that air on radio or TV, or participating in the actual democratic process at city council meetings.

Students can address community problems, and improve the community through activities such as community clean-ups, food drives, peer tutoring and other projects. But if students wish to create lasting change in their communities, they will probably need to work with local officials, and they will need some understanding of how local public policy decisions are made. Students will need to learn who has responsibility for making rules or decisions about the issues with which they are concerned, and how to access those officials. Students also will need to know how local public policy decisions are influenced by existing laws and decisions made at higher levels of government such as the state or federal government.

When students learn about their world—the issues, the problems, the people and programs helping to create social change—they begin to find their place as active citizens. When students are involved in projects that have real consequences for themselves, their families and friends, and when they know the community is watching, they work harder and learn more. Service-learning provides students with opportunities for "authentic learning" or problem-solving activities that incorporate real-life questions and issues in a format that encourages collaborative effort dialogue with informed expert sources, and generalization to broader ideas and application" (Christensen 1995).

Young people of all ages want their beliefs and actions to have value and relevance. It can be life changing when they realize, when faced with challenges and hard work, they really can make a difference in their world.

Civics In Action Snapshot

Service-Learning and Civics in Orofino

As part of a service-learning project, students at Orofino Jr. High and Orofino High School were involved in the entire election process, from examining the candidates and the issues, learning about the democratic caucus system, training and working at the polls, and voting. One of the goals for this service-learning project was to increase voter turnout in Clearwater County.

Guest speakers were brought in to talk about the Democratic Caucus system to the students. A Clearwater County Election Official taught the students about the primary ballots and how people voted in a primary election as opposed to the general election. Seniors at the high school were trained to work at the polls and to help in registering voters. When Orofino Jr. High students were out registering voters, a staff member from the Idaho Congress complimented them for "doing a civic project on the weekend." These students realized their service was not only making a difference in their community, but was also noted and appreciated by high-level officials.

While the students were following the candidates and the issues, several high school students stated, "I wish I could vote this year."

Orofino Students meet Idaho Congressmen

What should be taught so that students retain the principles of civic engagement?

The four components to a complete civic education are: civic *KNOWLEDGE*, SKILLS, ATTITUDES and *BEHAVIORS.* By teaching civic knowledge and skills in every service-learning project, students can begin to demonstrate civic attitudes and behaviors. Here are a few examples:

KNOWLEDGE	➢ Local, state, national or global history of a topic ➢ How public policy is created ➢ Principles of our nation's founding documents ➢ Rights, responsibilities and requirements of citizenship ➢ Structure of local, state and national government ➢ Global context in which the U.S. functions	SKILLS	➢ Communication (including active listening, public speaking, etc.) ➢ Critical thinking about local issues ➢ Persuasive letter writing to the editor or a representative ➢ Problem solving ➢ Working cooperatively in a group ➢ Gathering and evaluating evidence
ATTITUDES	➢ Self-efficacy ➢ Sense of her/his obligation or role in society ➢ Genuine motivation to participate ➢ Empathy ➢ Open-mindedness ➢ Confidence ➢ Respect for individuals and groups that hold different values, opinions and beliefs	BEHAVIORS	➢ Informed voting ➢ Continued involvement in a community organization ➢ Maintained awareness of current events ➢ Cultural sensitivity ➢ Follow through ➢ Coalition building

Service-learning and Project-based Education

Project-based learning is a model for classroom activity that shifts away from the classroom practices of teacher-centered lessons and emphasizes learning activities that are long-term, interdisciplinary, student-centered, and integrated with real world issues and practices.

Project-based education combines relevant curriculum, authentic work on real-life skills and exhibitions of mastery. The research clearly demonstrates marked improvement in retention of what is learned using project-based education.

Cleaning up a stream, visiting elderly residents in a nursing home or mentoring younger students can be service-learning projects. But limited projects like these, while certainly worthwhile, are unlikely to lead to any lasting change. An older student mentoring and tutoring a struggling younger student from a low-income neighborhood, for example, may serve as a role model for the youngster and may help them to do better in school. But without a teacher who seeks to help students understand the context of the problems they address, the older student may never understand the social and economic conditions that contribute to the academic difficulties of the younger student and others like them, or the public policies that allow such conditions to persist. If students do not understand why the problem exists, they (and the teacher) cannot expect to solve the problem nor can they expect to learn the skills necessary to solve other social problems.

On the other hand, a teacher could work with their class to study the lives of poor people, including historical figures and local community members who have overcome poverty. Students could learn about the effects and causes of poverty and the public policies and programs designed to assist poor people. Rather than tutor individual children on a short-term basis, students might work with the school district, local community members and government officials to establish a tutoring program, or to publicize and expand existing programs. This kind of project-based service project would provide opportunities for students to apply and practice participatory and cognitive civic skills, and could help them develop the confidence they need to continue participating in public life and attempting to solve real social problems.

Following are examples of projects conducted by teachers working with Learn and Service Idaho. These examples show how service-learning can help students develop civic skills and dispositions while reinforcing the lessons they learn in school.

Snapshots of Civic Learning

Lakeland High School, Rathdrum

Care to Bare the Cold

After visiting a homeless shelter and learning about homelessness in their area, the Lakeland students held a "Care to Bare the Cold" at the end of October 2007. The students generated this idea to actually experience what it would be like to be homeless by spending the night sleeping in cardboard boxes on the high school's tennis courts. It was a cold, rainy night so the 40 students and 4 teachers gathered around fire barrels and some tried to "weather proof" their cardboard boxes. There was no food allowed. True stories of homeless people were shared by a guest speaker that helped make the students feel this homeless experience.

In their study on homelessness, these students experienced just how hard it is to be homeless. They learned that about 300 local homeless people were out there that same night sleeping on the street. One girl reported she just tried to "survive" the cold night, and it wasn't until the following day that the reality hit of what it would be like not to be able to come home to a warm house. After "Care to Bare the Cold", the Lakeland students donated blankets, Wal-Mart gift cards, and food to local shelters.

A project such as this one could provide the context for a number of civic lessons. Students could advocate to local and state agencies for more affordable housing. This project could provide opportunities for students to learn about how local agencies and community-based organizations work with one another and with state and federal agencies. Students could study how each branch of the state and federal government directly impacts the life of their community. The class could interview a city council member or deputy about the government's role in providing services for people in need.

ANSER Public Charter School, Boise

No Word for Bubbles

Who would have guessed blowing bubbles and playing soccer would have created the bridge that crossed the communication gap between a refugee family from Burundi, and the1st-3rd graders at ANSER Charter School? But that is what happened when ANSER partnered with the Agency for New Americans. The students from ANSER visited the Agency, and watched an ESL class. By reading the book, *The Lost Children* it helped the students see just a little of what the refugee families had gone through. Later, they also participated in "pretending" to be a refugee family by taking roles and facing tough scenarios like, "The second oldest child has gotten malaria from a mosquito, and is too sick to walk. What will you do?"

The kids took household items over to an empty apartment that the Agency was setting up for this Burundi refugee family. The family, who couldn't speak English, were forced to leave their home in Burundi, and ended up in a refugee camp in Tanzania before coming to the U.S.. The students (3 first-graders, 1 second-grader and 6 third-graders) helped make beds, carry groceries, set up kitchen supplies, and get a bathroom ready for use. It wasn't until a week later that the students went back to the apartment to actually meet the Burundi family. At first it was a little awkward with the language barrier, but it didn't stop the children from reaching out to all the members of the family. There was a Congolese family that was able to speak limited English, and they helped as interpreters. All awkwardness evaporated when a soccer ball was tossed out and the kids joined in a lively game of soccer. The students also found out that there are more ways to communicate than spoken language when they brought out the bubbles. Blowing bubbles with a giant bubble wand was a complete fascination for the refugee kids, and adults as well. It was discovered that there was no word in their language for "blowing bubbles", but there were many words for compassion and caring.

Continuing education is often very important for adult immigrants, so they can learn a new language or other information that will help them adapt to and thrive in their new home. Students can research and provide information on resources available from local and state governments, school districts, as well as nonprofit agencies. Students can find out from the school program coordinators what services are offered, and if there are needs that can be met through youth involvement.

Below are some additional ideas for service-learning projects that could provide opportunities for public policy lessons.

➢ **Anti-Littering Law**
During a community service project, students were asked to pick up trash around their community. Realizing this community clean-up was only a temporary solution, students wanted to research how they could influence local agencies in making a law that addresses litter. Students would need to know how to influence local authorities. What are the steps in raising awareness of the problem? Who would they need to talk to about their solution?

➢ **Idaho Water Rights**
Idaho Water Rights definition is: **"**The right to divert the public waters of the state of Idaho and put them to a beneficial use, in accordance with one's priority date."
Students could learn about:
- What is a Water Right?
- What do "beneficial use" and "priority date" mean?
- How is a water right established?
- Historical and modern methods for rights to surface and ground water.
- Can a water right be changed? How do you make changes?
- Make a change in the use of your water right.
- How do I get a water right? Who might need one?

➢ **Preserving Idaho public lands**
Students learn about the amount of available public space in Idaho compared with that held privately, as well as how local, state and federal governments acquire and manage public lands through conservation easements and other means. Students learn about the environmental effects of different land uses and the rules that regulate such use. Students may learn the history of a particular tract of land by studying past uses, or they may study the origins of local, state and national public lands and parks programs. Students learn about the influence of different interest groups in utilizing or protecting land and how such groups are regulated.

In addition to the opportunity to learn about local, state, federal regulations and government, these examples provide students with opportunities to hone communication skills such as persuasive writing and public speaking, as well as research skills. These skills are useful not only in civics class, but in any academic discipline. These particular examples could provide students with opportunities to learn about advertising, public and personal health, international economics, property rights, conservation and the environment.

A clear benefit of ambitious projects such as these, as opposed to simpler projects such as clean-ups or nursing home visits, is they provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate across disciplines and learn from one another. In addition, they offer many opportunities to meet state standards. Long-term projects offer opportunities for

students and teachers at different grade levels to work together and reinforce lessons learned over time. Most importantly, by linking service-learning to civics, schools can help students develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for effective citizenship.

Who supports service-learning?

Due to increased public support, service-learning is now in a position to realize its considerable potential. Over the past two decades, teachers, administrators, and parents have come to understand that when service is linked to learning and placed at the core of the curriculum, the combination opens the door to the multi-faceted education Americans want for all young people, equipping them for their roles not just as learners, but as community members and workers too (Roper Summary).

Most decision making happens at the local level for service-learning initiatives. Many Idaho community leaders, students, parents, educators and school board members are outspoken advocates for service-learning. There are also important service-learning supports at national and state levels.

History of Service-learning

The first federal service-learning legislation in 1990 created a commission to award grants to states, schools and community organizations to support service-learning. A 1993 law authorized funds for every state to incorporate service-learning into schools. In 2003, the Corporation for National and Community Service distributed over $20 million through its Learn and Serve America program to support local service-learning efforts across the country.

As part of the civic mission mandated in Idaho Education Law, the Idaho State Department of Education (SDE) provides statewide leadership in service-learning through Learn and Serve Idaho. The vision of Learn and Serve Idaho is to assist schools in implementing site-based programs of service-learning through policy, practice and capacity building. The SDE provides service-learning resources, grants, and networking opportunities for local educators, community members and students. Training and technical assistance is provided to staff at participating schools, districts and communities to develop commitment and investment in service-learning.

Vision and Goals for Service-Learning Idaho

A. Our vision is to have service-learning recognized and utilized by K-12 schools, community organizations and institutions of higher education throughout Idaho as:

➢ An effective method for meeting today's educational demands
➢ A force in education and community reform
➢ A vehicle for promoting civic responsibility and leadership among Idaho's youth.

B. To achieve this vision, we have developed the following goals and objectives, which represent an effort to simultaneously create top-down and bottom-up supports for Learn & Serve in Idaho.

Goal #1:   We will increase the impact of Service-Learning programs on youths, communities and schools in Idaho

Objectives:
1.1   Increase the reach of Service-Learning programs
1.2   Improve the quality of Service-Learning programs

Goal #2:   We will increase the impacts of Service-Learning on K-12 participants and their teachers.

Objectives:
2.1   Increase students' engagement in school (including academic achievement, attendance and graduation).
2.2   Increase students' civic competencies and skills in support of local and state academic content standards.
2.3   Increase curricular integration and assessment of student learning in support of local and state academic content standards.

Goal #3:   We will create a climate of support for Service-Learning at the local and district levels.

Objectives:
3.1   Fund instructional model of integration that correlate service-learning to the Idaho Achievement Standards.
3.2   Create Service-Learning Youth Advisory Councils.
3.3   Strengthen Community Partnerships.

In addition to direct support for service-learning programs and regions, Learn & Serve Idaho offers a range of resources that can help you align your initiatives with state and local priorities. Links to these resources are provided in Chapter 3.

Service-Learning Resources and Events

- ➢ The National Learn & Serve Challenge
  www.learnandservechallenge.org

- ➢ Character Education Partnership's National Forum,
  http://www.character.org/eventsawards/forum

- ➢ National Service-Learning Conference,
  www.nylc.org

- ➢ Global Youth Service Day, http://www.gysd.net

- ➢ National Youth Service Day, http://www.ysa.org/nysd.

For a directory of national service-learning initiatives, please reference Chapter 3.

Private and Corporate Foundations supporting Service-learning efforts

Nationwide:

- ➢ The W. K. Kellogg Foundation
- ➢ Carnegie Corporation of New York
- ➢ DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund
- ➢ The Ford Foundation
- ➢ Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
- ➢ Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
- ➢ Surnda Foundation
- ➢ State Farm Companies Foundation

CHAPTER II – The Process of Service-learning

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General Processes

Research has shown it is key to student effectiveness and success to follow a proven process of service-learning before engaging in any service-learning activity. When the process of service-learning is broken down, four essential and interdependent stages emerge:

> ➢ Preparation

> ➢ Action

> ➢ Reflection

> ➢ Demonstration
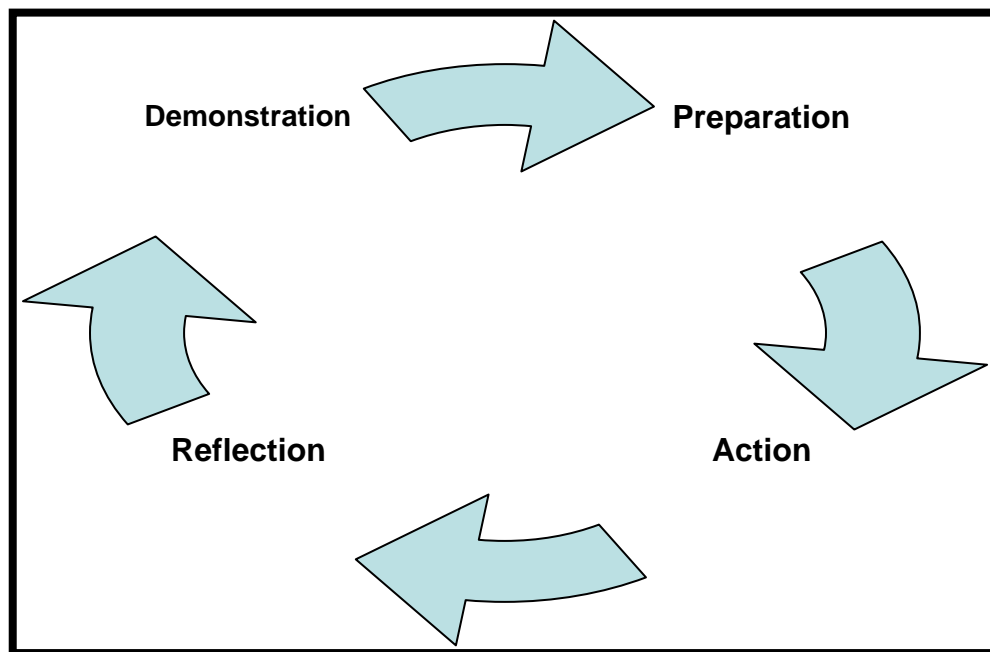
These processes are linked together and often are used simultaneously. It may help to visualize how overlays are used in an anatomy book to reveal what is occurring in the human body system by system. Each stage of service-learning in action is like one of these overlays, revealing one part of an interdependent whole.

Preparation

The first stage to any service-learning activity begins with preparation. Teachers and students work together in the preparation phase to set the stage for learning and social action. Students, with the help of their teacher, identify a real community need. Groups should use some sort of needs assessment to determine goals and strategies.   A sample needs assessments, entitled "Taking Action in Our Community", is provided in Chapter 3, p. 75.

One place to start is within schools, and students often begin assessing community needs by surveying other students. Youth councils in some Idaho schools and districts have conducted numerous surveys to track ever-wider segments of the local population, and to assess changes over time.

How Do You Define Community?
It can be the...
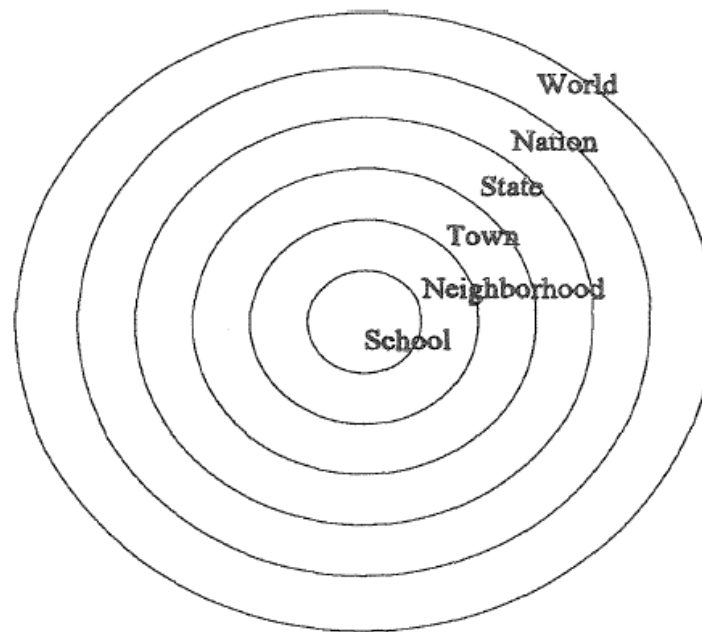
While service projects should be based on genuine needs, an extensive needs assessment may be difficult for some school systems. Teachers and students, however, should do enough research to be confident that their project activities will be of genuine value to the school or community. For instance, at an Idaho magnet school for the arts and humanities, an environmental, science-based service-learning project was implemented to strengthen science standards. At the same time, their recycling project not only increased environmental awareness, but met a real need in their school and community.

It is at this stage that teachers need to develop collaborative partnerships with local community agencies that will become a part of their project (i.e., local shelters, retirement homes, libraries, government agencies, etc.) to support high quality meaningful service experiences. In order to sustain service-learning in your school or district, seek out collaborative partnerships with local businesses to engender support of projects through cash and material donations.

In preparation, the students research and discuss the subject using books, role plays, interviews, and the Internet. This is the time to schedule any visits, guest speakers, or field trips. As your students gain skills and experience, let your students plan these tasks. In this process of active learning and critical thinking, students grow to understand the underlying problems as well as related subject matter. Investigation, discussion and analysis lead to plans for action. The service project can also be chosen based on the skills, talents and interests of the students.

What is work for you, is a learning experience for students

Let students take responsibility for ….
- ➢ **Paperwork**
- ➢ **Phone calls**
- ➢ **Checking details with administrators or staff**
- ➢ **Errands within the school and within the neighborhood**
- ➢ **Organizing materials**
- ➢ **Fundraising**
- ➢ **Research about the issue**

If you give students some guidance and enough time, they can do the job and lighten your load!

Preparation also includes the following steps:

1.   Points of Entry

A logical place to start is to think about what skills, content and themes you are already teaching. To avoid service-learning becoming an "add-on", examine your current curricula and find areas that fit well with service-learning, using service-learning strategies where they make the most sense. Using the "Establishing Curricular Connections: Points of Entry" form in Chapter 3, p. 65 from *The Complete Guide to Service-learning* (C. Kaye. 2004) may be helpful because it identifies five strategies to use to generate service-learning project ideas complete with sample project ideas and literature resources.

2.   Making Connections Across the Curriculum

There is often the question: "How do I come up with ideas for service-learning projects that have strong curricular connections? Service-learning differs from other forms of community service or volunteer work because the education of students and young people is always at its core. Because service-learning can be applied to almost every subject area, this naturally encourages cross-curricular integration, which can help students strengthen and broaden their learning, helping them meet academic standards. In most cases teachers naturally are looking for these connections, and ways to strengthen them during the planning phase of the service-learning activities. As with the entire service-learning process, it helps to remain flexible. Some connections can be spontaneously generated by the questions raised and needs determined during the project. Refer to the forms "Across the Curriculum" along with the sample "Elders Across the Curriculum" in Chapter 3, p.68-69 for practical ideas in incorporating cross-curricular connections in your service-learning projects.

The Learn and Serve Idaho web site at http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/learn_serve/ provides examples of lesson plans that are directly linked to the standards. Here you will find links to standards-based curriculum written by teachers from around the state and nation. Looking at what others have done is an excellent way to get new ideas and get organized for a new service-learning project. A collective effort to share high-quality curriculum helps establish service-learning's value in meeting Idaho's content standards.

For other service-learning resources you can use in planning your instruction, (e.g. best practice guides and examples) please refer to Chapter 3.

3.   Clarify Partnerships

For sustainability of good service-learning projects, you need to seek out partnerships that will support and enhance the service-learning. Establish contact with collaborators—teachers, parents, community members, agency representatives, or others—who you want to participate. Discuss and clarify specific roles and responsibilities for all involved to avoid any confusion once the project is underway.

When you are identifying partners, remember that, while community-based organizations are often delighted to have people call and offer to help, they may at first look upon the offer as a matter of free labor. They may not have considered the importance of building learning opportunities into the service. The community partner also should provide meaningful service experiences set in a "real-life" context and meet real community needs, as well as provide opportunities for students to interact with adults and be acknowledged as positive, contributing members to society. The successful service-learning partnership will be one that strives to improve the quality of education, as it improves the quality of life in the community.

Community partners and schools exist in "radically different worlds" as stated by Mark Batenburg (1995). He emphasizes the importance of understanding these differences. "The key to smoother relations is not only to be aware of the cultural differences, but to be aware of the specific details of the clash, the daily places where misunderstandings occur and frustration mount."

The following chart identifies seven points of difference:

	Community Organization/Agency	School
Focus	The organization or agency focuses on the end *product*; trees planted, houses built, meals prepared, students tutored, clients served.	The school focuses on the *process*, the learning involved in the project, the acquisition of knowledge and skills.
Why Engage in Service-Learning	The organization or agency sees service-learning as an opportunity to involve youth volunteers, to meet current and future community needs.	The school sees service-learning as an effective strategy to educate students and teach civic responsibility.
Project Planning and Leadership	The community partner generally follows a template, based on prior experiences with managing volunteers to meet the goals of the organization or agency.	The school sees "youth voice" as an essential component in service-learning, with students assuming the role of planning and leading the project.
Project Scheduling	The organization or agency schedules projects based either on the needs of the constituency served, or on the availability Of adult volunteers; weekend projects are often a good option.	The school plans service-learning projects to coordinate with class schedules; ideally, the project takes place during the school day.
Access to Project Sites	The community partner usually does not assume responsibility for transporting volunteers to and from the project site.	The school must consider the added direct cost, liability and scheduling consequences if transportation to and from the project site is required.
Measure of Success	The organization or agency determines its success by the completion or provision of service, as defined by the task.	The school measures success in meeting curricular or academic benchmarks and standards.
Assessment	The community partner asks, "How did we do?" – and evaluates success based on concrete, quantifiable results such as how many trees were planted, how many acres were restored, how many clients were served.	The school sees the project as part of a continuum and asks, "What will we do differently if we do this again?" Evaluation originates from the reflection process, ongoing throughout the project.

What the school needs to communicate to the community partner

➢ What is service-learning?
   - Provide a definition that can be easily understood.

➢ What are the best practices in a service-learning program?
   - Build upon the experience the community partner has working with youth and explain the eight best practices from Chapter I.

➢ What are the benefits to the community of service-learning?
   - Provide the organization with evidence from the research on the positive

effects of service-learning. Help the community partner see the value of youth service as both a short- and long-term resource that can meet their needs.

➢ What are the academic or curricular standards to which teachers are held accountable?
- Community partners often first encounter standards when they are told, by the school, that teachers no longer have the time to involve students in community service because of the demands of meeting rigorous new academic benchmarks and testing.

➢ What is "youth voice," and why is it important?
- Help the partner understand how youth voice will enhance the results of the service opportunity, resulting in both short- and long-term benefits not only for youth, but also for the community.

(For an excellent resource on community partners, see Abravenel, Susan A. (2003*).
Building Community Through Service-Learning: The Role of the Community Partner.*)

See the forms: "Community Contact Information" and "Community Response Form" in Chapter 3, p. 71-72 for additional help in working with community partners.

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Community partners for service-learning are everywhere!

Find them with the help of people around you.

Talk to...

❖ your students

❖ nonprofit agencies

❖ parents

❖ local government officials

❖ other teachers, administrators, or staff at your school

</div>

4.   Make a Plan

The next step is to Identify and write down your service idea. Sample "Planning For Service-learning" forms are provided in Chapter 3, p. 73 - 74.   Include in detail the content and skills that will be taught, the cross-curricular connections you can make, the books the students will read, and the community contacts that would be helpful to find and cultivate. *The Complete Guide to Service-Learning* (C. Kaye, 2004) is an excellent resource for a comprehensive listing of literature associated with different service-learning themes that helps connect classroom learning and literacy with service to the community. Think about where your students will have their voice in the project. Be specific about your plans for preparation, action, reflection and demonstration. Again, all stakeholders should be involved and specific benchmarks and actions set against a clear timeline. Evaluation and assessment measures that examine progress toward the goals should be included in the strategic plan. The Continuum for Service-Learning Engagement (Chapter 3, p.70) is another useful tool for developing strategies for moving the various groups (youth, educators, administrators, community and policymakers) from "awareness" of service-learning to "investment' in service-learning.

PREPARATION

With guidance from their teacher, students:
- ➢ Identify a need.
- ➢ Draw upon previously required skills and knowledge.
- ➢ Acquire new information through a variety of means and methods.
- ➢ Collaborate with community partners.
- ➢ Develop a plan that encourages responsibility.
- ➢ Recognize the integration of service and learning.

Action

After preparation comes action. With solid preparation, students can proceed and confidently carry out their plan of action.   Perhaps they implement an anti-bullying program at their school, grow vegetables in a garden plot to give to needy families, or perform a Reader's Theater for pre-school kids while tutoring 1st-3rd graders in reading. The possibilities are endless. The plan may be carried out over the course of an academic year, or a semester.   In order for service-learning to be life impacting, activities should be of sustained or significant duration. Program experience suggests that a minimum of 40 hours over a school year is necessary to yield positive results for students and the community. It's important to be flexible as unexpected things can happen and service-learning works best when students are able to see their own ideas in action. Refer to Chapter 3, p. 75 -76, for several "Action Forms" to help you set your

action in motion.

ACTION

Students should take action that:
- ➤ Has value, purpose, and meaning.
- ➤ Uses previously learned and newly acquired academic skills and knowledge.
- ➤ Offers unique learning experiences.
- ➤ Has real life consequences.
- ➤ Is in a safe environment to learn, to make mistakes, and to succeed.

Reflection

Reflection is indispensable to the entire service-learning process, and is what weaves it all together both intellectually and emotionally for everyone involved. Reflection can connect students' experience with classroom content and studies. Through reflection, students examine the difference they made, discuss thoughts and feelings, consider project improvements and receive feedback. During reflection, teachers guide the process using various modalities, such as role play, discussion and journal writing. Reflection should occur during all stages of your service-learning experience.

Reflection means taking the time to think, talk and write about:

- ➤ What is happening during the project or program (**What**?)

- ➤ What it means and how it connects to school curricula and standards in depth (**So What**?)

- ➤ How the knowledge and skills gained through service-learning can be applied to "real" local or global issues (**Now What**?)

During preparation you can ask the students what they expect to learn and how do they expect to feel? Students can role play situations they imagine will occur to practice and prepare and also to uncover anxieties or misconceptions. Students can consider such questions as, "What will you do if the child you're tutoring won't listen to the story?"

On-the-scene reflection can occur as service is actually going on based on your observations. Students can also take the initiative by raising concerns, sharing their excitement, or posing questions. During this on-the-spot reflection, students sometimes

have insights or make recommendation that can improve their experience and the impact of their contributions right then and there.

Following service, teachers should vary methods of reflection since people naturally reflect in different ways. Methods of reflection can include art, poetry, music, role playing, journals, mime, sculpture, drama, movement and photographs. Students can develop a skit on what they experienced or a dilemma they faced. Students can represent their thoughts and feelings of their experience by drawing for ten minutes, and then have them write silently for five minutes about the experience.

REFLECTION

During systematic reflection, the teacher or student guides the process using various modalities such as role-play, discussion, and journal writing. Participating students:

- ➤ Describe what happened.
- ➤ Record the difference made.
- ➤ Discuss thoughts and feelings.
- ➤ Place experience in larger context.
- ➤ Receive feedback.
- ➤ Identify questions.

Demonstration

Demonstration of student skills, insights and outcomes takes place when students report to peers, faculty, parents, and/or community members. Other ways to spread the word of their service-learning experience:

- ➤ Students submit a feature to the local newspaper about a particular service-learning project. The story could include interviews with community members, students and teachers, and focus on what happened, its significance to the community, and what the next steps will be, based on the findings.

- ➤ Students work together in the classroom to prepare presentations to the school board and recommendations to the city council based on what they learned while conducting a project in the community.

- ➤ Students create a website that helps others to learn from the students' experiences, or create art forms, such as murals.

Celebration

Celebration of student success should also be incorporated into the demonstration process. Celebration includes taking the evidence collected earlier in the process and using it to show the progress that has been made. This helps to build momentum for continuing the project. There are many ways to celebrate students' accomplishments, including:

➤ Recognition at public community meetings such as school board meetings or local business meetings

➤ Media coverage about service-learning projects

➤ Celebratory awards ceremonies, breakfasts or other events that, on their own, are newsworthy events.

DEMONSTRATION

Students demonstrate mastery of skills, insights, and outcomes by, for example:

➤ Reporting to their peers, faculty, parents, and/or community members.
➤ Writing articles or letters to local newspapers regarding issues of public concern.
➤ Extending their experience to develop future projects benefitting the community.
➤ Creating a publication that helps others learn from the students' experience.
➤ Presentations and performances.
➤ Visual art forms, such as murals.

School-Level Processes

Youth Voice

One of the distinguishing features of service-learning--and one of the most difficult for many teachers--is the central role of student voice in the learning process. Service-learning is a strategy for teaching and empowering young people. For this empowerment to happen, students must be given multiple opportunities to make decisions and take leadership, and to learn from the consequences of their choices and

actions.

While no responsible educator would suggest that students be given complete autonomy in deciding what to learn and how to learn it, teachers can carefully guide the choices students make, making sure students clearly understand what they are expected to learn from their service experiences. As students move from choosing among a relatively narrow set of project options to more complex decisions about strategies, partners and trade-offs, they build skills that will help them to become sensible consumers, responsible family members and effective citizens.

It is important for younger elementary students to also have a voice in their service-learning projects. In order to keep within their developmental process, it might be best to have them help with planning and decision making on projects at their school site. Some of these projects might include recycling, school beautification or campus climate (how are students treating each other?).   Projects might also be centered close by in their local neighborhood focusing on issues like energy efficiency with compact florescent lighting or water conservation.   It is important to start training elementary students to think outside of themselves, and to start learning civic responsibility. Once these students reach middle school and high school they will be ready to be advocates for issues that are important to them.

Naturally, students will sometimes make mistakes. It is up to the teacher to prepare students for the possibility that some aspect of their service project may not succeed. And it is crucial that teachers help students consider decisions before they are made and reflect on the consequences - whether positive or negative — throughout the life of the project.

While it is often difficult for teachers who use traditional teacher-centered practice to relinquish some of their authority in the classroom, many teachers are surprised to find that allowing students some measure of choice spurs the students to take ownership of and responsibility for their own learning. Many examples can be found in which academically low-achieving students - who are often resentful of adult authority - have taken the opportunity to prove their own responsibility through service-learning very seriously. The chance to make decisions and take leadership roles (with the support of the teacher and other adults) may provide a rare sense of success and control that keeps such students engaged in school. And for high-achieving students who may be bored in the classroom, the opportunity to lead others can have a similar effect on school engagement.

Student Voice at ANSER Charter School

ANSER Charter School has 1st and 2nd grades study all aspects of ants, including the different varieties, their food, and the communities they live in. Learning about ant communities is a direct curricular connection to learning about human communities, which is part of the Idaho Content Standards for 1st and 2nd grades.

ANSER Charter School, in Boise, jointly rents a building with a gymnastic studio and a swim club. During this module of study, the building manager discovered an epidemic of ants in the building and announced he was going to have an exterminator come in to take care of the problem. Of course the students were very upset with the thought of killing all the ants. Through their studies they had learned that our human communities and families have a lot in common with ant communities. The teacher was wise at this point to tell the students the problem, and to ask them what they thought should be done. The students decided they needed to research what kind of ants they were, and why the ants had appeared in the building, so they set out to scrutinize the area. They determined that the ants were being attracted by the food, trash and water in the building. They couldn't do anything about the water from the pool, but they determined to advocate for elimination of the trash. These 1st and 2nd graders went to each class at their school (Kindergarten to Jr. High) and made a presentation and request for the students to pick up their trash properly to stop the infiltration of ants in the building. They made signs and posters saying "Don't Kill Ants! Keep us ANSER not 'ANTser'!" Next these young students went and talked to the building manager, and asked him to please hold off with the extermination until they could be given the chance to stop the ants. He agreed. These students were able to help control the ants by having students remove the trash from the school. They were motivated to say, "We have to do something about this!" Young elementary students, who are progressively trained to think outside of themselves, will be ready not only when they reach middle school and high school, but when they reach adulthood, to be prepared for effective, principled citizenship.

Assessment

Teachers should continually look for ways to assess the service-learning experience to ensure that defined content and skill objectives were met for the students, and there was real value for the community. Assessment should take place throughout the process and should be incorporated into the planning process—whether that means a teacher planning how to assess what students have learned, or a district superintendent planning how to evaluate the implementation of a particular service-learning program. Assessment should also be included in the action phase; learning should be measured on an ongoing basis. Assessment results (including reflections) also can be used to celebrate the accomplishments of your service-learning initiative.

Assessments of student learning can include student test scores, as well as results of teachers' pre-and post-project assessments; student portfolios; performance assessments; and other, more traditional pencil-and-paper assessments such as essays and reports. There are several assessments for service-learning forms in Chapter 3, p. 83 - 87 for reviewing these issues. There is also a Service-Learning Rubric in Chapter 3, p. 82 to evaluate your progress during your project.

Students should demonstrate learning in a variety of ways. Written assessments can be balanced with performance assessments. Examples for each are shown below

Written Assignments

Research reports - reports on topics, handed in to teachers

Essays - opinion papers, interpretive essays

Tests - teacher-developed tests and external tests

Journals - on the **what?** the **so what?** And the **now what?**

Performance Assessments

Presentations - to community groups, school boards, etc. about the project

Performances - dramatic presentation and skits, original songs, concerts

News media - development of paper-and-pencil assessments into editorials, broadcasts and news articles suitable for a variety of media

Official Documents - developing reports and other paper and pencil assessments into materials that can be used by external groups to inform decision making

Portfolios - of best student work, including reflection papers, presentations, etc.

Youth Leadership

Youth leadership is a hallmark of effective service-learning. This means while teachers and community partners provide guidance, students identify community needs, brainstorm strategies for addressing the challenges they identify, and evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts.

These actions need to challenge students. To meet the goals, students should have to develop in new ways. These could include learning to write their own work plans, learning to work in teams, and organizing their own jobs and materials - skills that are not necessarily strengthened in a traditional classroom setting.

Youth leadership does not happen by chance. Student-centered teaching practices are the key to building students' sense of ownership and investment. Structuring classroom and community activities in ways that strengthen youth leadership takes practice and support. But it is possible - and rewarding - for adults to rethink their roles and practice new ways of organizing teaching and learning activities.

See the snapshot on the next page for "Sample Actions that Require Students to Stretch" for some practical ideas.

Snapshot
Sample Actions that Require Students to "Stretch"

Sample Actions that Require Students to "Stretch"

Learning goals: **Science, Math and Technology Standards** — Design and Technology Designing Solutions: Students use technological/engineering processes to design solutions to problems.

Service goal: **Design a product that** improves the quality of life for students with intensive special needs (ISN); provide substantial contact between ISN and non-ISN students; increase awareness and appreciation for the challenges disabled people face.

1) In groups, research problems ISN students face at our school: meet the two students and their caregivers, learn about their lives.
2) In the group, identify a problem to be addressed; agree on this problem definition.
3) Research scope of problem (how many others have the same need) using U.S. Census and ADA data via Internet.
4) Research existing solutions (what has already been done to address this problem) using print, electronic and interview sources: U.S. Patent Office Database, commercial Web sites and catalogs, ISN caregivers.
5) In the group, set "specifications" (things a good solution should have); identify "alternatives" (i.e., various possibilities); analyze information and choose best solution, using a problem-solving matrix.
6) Build and test at least 2-3 successive prototypes, starting with cardboard model and ending with full-scale prototype.
7) Present and defend prototype before community panel.

Source: *Instructional Best Practices Guide for Service-Learning*, Community Works Press, 2000.

Note: Whenever possible, service-learning projects should involve service recipients in assessing their own needs and finding solutions. This will help students avoid thinking of those they help as "charity cases" who are unable to help themselves. It also will increase the likelihood that students' understanding of the problem and proposed solutions are appropriate. Finally, it will help students learn to interact respectfully with people whose lives are significantly different from their own.

Professional Staff Development

At the school and district levels, service-learning can bring teachers, administrators, students and parents together around projects and common learning goals. System wide service-learning programs should include professional development and training that furthers the development of quality service-learning practices among staff, youth and community members.

Professional development for teachers is key to support an ambitious standards-based service-learning program. According to experts in the state, schools and districts need to make the following investments in professional development for service-learning to be effectively implemented.

At the minimum, teachers need:
➢ Eight to 16 hours of professional development, which includes the philosophy of service-learning and opportunities to apply what they have learned
➢ Work in that time on how to facilitate student reflection
➢ Professional development that models the service-learning process – or that is as experiential as possible.

Ideally, teachers need:
➢ At least 2 to 5 days of professional development as described above
➢ Teacher compensation and education credit for the training
➢ Teacher participation in an authentic service-learning project – as a learner, which could be through an alternative spring break program or an add-on week prior to school in the fall
➢ An on-site (school-level) service-learning mentor for ongoing coaching and support throughout the school year
➢ Enough other teachers participating so the school can muster a "critical mass" of service-learning teachers to support a learning community.

Why is professional development important?

➢ Teachers and schools are facing accountability pressures that encourage them to focus primarily on literacy and math. In fact, in some districts, three-hour literacy blocks are mandated. For unprepared teachers, this can mean service-learning will be neglected. Service-learning coaches report that, where they have a relationship with the school literacy coach, teachers have a greater understanding of how to integrate service-learning into the literacy block. They are less likely to narrow the curriculum and more likely to teach civics, social studies and science in meaningful ways through service-learning.

➢ Youth leadership and ownership is an important part of service-learning. In this model, teachers provide resources and some structure, and students direct the work. But this type of model can be threatening to traditional teachers,

particularly without adequate training. When service-learning is put into place as a pro forma requirement, it is generally unsuccessful. Such a requirement can lead to a community service requirement that has little to do with education. Successful service-learning teachers report that, while letting go – and possibly letting kids' projects fail – is frightening for the teacher, the payoffs in student learning and engagement are tremendous.

To examine how much support is available for school and district service-learning efforts, it is helpful to use a general checklist, provided below.

School and District Checklist

☐ Is service-learning incorporated into the vision and goals of your school and/or district?

☐ Is service-learning included in your school's accreditation plan?

☐ Is service-learning incorporated into your school or district professional development plan?

☐ Are teachers supported to do service-learning through ongoing training, technical assistance and planning time?

☐ Are funds allocated at the school or district level to support service-learning?

☐ Do hiring practices support the recruitment and retention of effective teachers that are trained in service-learning methodology?

☐ Does the school board support service-learning?

CHAPTER III - Resources

This chapter provides resources you can use in developing your services-learning projects. It is organized around three different types of resources:

➢ **Links** to online resource about service-learning, including:
  • Resources for classrooms
  • Resources for schools and districts
  • National Service-Learning organizations
  • Other resources

➢ **Worksheets and other tools,** which include pre/post assessments, sample needs assessments, evaluation rubrics and more.

➢ **Research references** used in the report.

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Links

Resources for classrooms

Descriptions of and ideas for service-learning projects:

Curriculum exemplars – Vermont Community Works Online Resource
http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/exemplars/index.html

Ideas for service-learning projects K-12 — KIDS Consortium
http://www.kidsconsortium.org/

Planning resources and guidelines:

Instructional best practices for service-learning & Instructional Planning Guide —
Vermont Community Works Online Resource Center
http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/cwresources/index.html

Earth Force Community Action and Problem Solving program (CAPS) –
http://www.earthforce.org

Resources for assessment:

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse: http://www.servicelearning.org

Service-learning Planning *and Assessment Guide - A Field Guide for Teachers*
Vermont Community Works Online Resource Center
http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/cwpublications/slassessguide/slassessguide.html

PALS- Performance Assessment Links in Science http://pals.sri.com/

Compendium of Assessment and Research Tools for Measuring Education and Youth
Development Outcomes
http://cart.rmcdenver.com/

Resources for schools and districts

Idaho State Department of Education
http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/learn_serve/

Vermont Community Works Online Resource Center: Site Level Best Practices for
Service-Learning
http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/cwresources/cwtools/s-ltools/slbpract/sitelevelbp.html

Cathryn Berger Kaye presents keynote service-learning workshops, program development, and service-learning literacy strategies for success. www.abcdbooks.org

National Service-Learning Organizations:

Learn and Serve America: http://www.learnandserve.org/

Learn and Serve America supports service-learning programs across the country by providing funding and training. It is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service- which is now a component of the USA Freedom Corps.

National Service-Learning Partnership: http://www.servicelearningpartnership.org
The partnership is a member organization whose purpose is to orchestrate a comprehensive and broad-based approach to making service-learning a standard part of students' education across the United States.

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse: http://www.servicelearning.org
The Learn and Serve America National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (NSLC) supports the service-learning community in higher education, kindergarten through grade 12, community-based initiatives and tribal programs, as well as all others interested in strengthening schools and communities using service-learning techniques and methodologies.

National Youth Leadership Council: http://www.nylc.org/
The National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) has been a pioneer in youth leadership initiatives since it began in 1983. NYLC was the first organization to champion a meaningful new vision of learning that addresses a dual purpose - educating America's K-12 and college-age students through thoughtful and practical service, while at the same time benefiting the communities in which those young people live.

National Service-Learning Initiatives

National Commission on Service-Learning: http://www.learningindeed.org/slcommission/
Under the leadership of Senator John Glenn, the National Service-Learning Commission examined the potential of service-learning to engage young people in their own learning and in the civic life of their communities, and issued a final report in 2002 that offered recommendations to help make service-learning available to all K-12 students.

Other Resources

Service-learning and No Child Left Behind
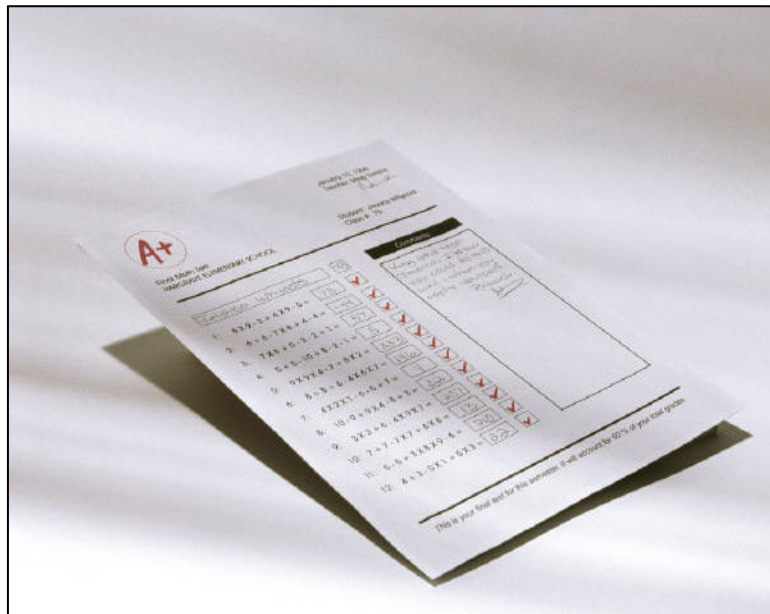
The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act- National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

http://search.servicelearning.org/index.php?q=%26quot%3Bno+child+left+behind%26quot%3B+OR+NCLB

This site provides links to a series of papers outlining service-learning's relation to the No Child Left Behind Act and various "title programs."

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Worksheets and other tools

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K-12 Service-Learning Standards for
Quality Practice

Meaningful Service

Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.

Indicators:

1. Service-learning experiences are appropriate to participant ages and developmental abilities.
2. Service-learning addresses issues that are personally relevant to the participants.
3. Service-learning provides participants with interesting and engaging service activities.
4. Service-learning encourages participants to understand their service experiences in the context of the underlying societal issues being addressed.
5. Service-learning leads to attainable and visible outcomes that are valued by those being served.

Link to Curriculum

Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.

Indicators:

1. Service-learning has clearly articulated learning goals.
2. Service-learning is aligned with the academic and/or programmatic curriculum.
3. Service-learning helps participants learn how to transfer knowledge and skills from one setting to another.
4. Service-learning that takes place in schools is formally recognized in school board policies and student records.

Service-learning is a philosophy, pedagogy, and model for community development that is used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.

nvlc

Reflection

Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society.
Indicators:
1. Service-learning reflection includes a variety of verbal, written, artistic, and nonverbal activities to demonstrate understanding and changes in participants' knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes.
2. Service-learning reflection occurs before, during, and after the service experience.
3. Service-learning reflection prompts participants to think deeply about complex community problems and alternative solutions.
4. Service-learning reflection encourages participants to examine their preconceptions and assumptions in order to explore and understand their roles and responsibilities as citizens.
5. Service-learning reflection encourages participants to examine a variety of social and civic issues related to their service-learning experience so that participants understand connections to public policy and civic life.

Diversity

Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.
Indicators
1. Service-learning helps participants identify and analyze different points of view to gain understanding of multiple perspectives.
2. Service-learning helps participants develop interpersonal skills in conflict resolution and group decision-making.
3. Service-learning helps participants actively seek to understand and value the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of those offering and receiving service.
4. Service-learning encourages participants to recognize and overcome stereotypes.

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Youth Voice

Service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults.

Indicators:

1. Service-learning engages youth in generating ideas during the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes.
2. Service-learning involves youth in the decision-making process throughout the service-learning experiences.
3. Service-learning involves youth and adults in creating an environment that supports trust and open expression of ideas.
4. Service-learning promotes acquisition of knowledge and skills to enhance youth leadership and decision-making.
5. Service-learning involves youth in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the service-learning experience.

Partnerships

Service-learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.

Indicators:

1. Service-learning involves a variety of partners, including youth, educators, families, community members, community-based organizations, and/or businesses.
2. Service-learning partnerships are characterized by frequent and regular communication to keep all partners well-informed about activities and progress.
3. Service-learning partners collaborate to establish a shared vision and set common goals to address community needs.
4. Service-learning partners collaboratively develop and implement action plans to meet specified goals.
5. Service-learning partners share knowledge and understanding of school and community assets and needs, and view each other as valued resources.

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K-12 Service-Learning Standards for
Quality Practice

Progress Monitoring

Service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals, and uses results for improvement and sustainability.

Indicators:

1. Service-learning participants collect evidence of progress toward meeting specific service goals and learning outcomes from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience.
2. Service-learning participants collect evidence of the quality of service-learning implementation from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience.
3. Service-learning participants use evidence to improve service-learning experiences.
4. Service-learning participants communicate evidence of progress toward goals and outcomes with the broader community, including policy-makers and education leaders, to deepen service-learning understanding and ensure that high quality practices are sustained.

Duration and Intensity

Service-learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.

Indicators:

1. Service-learning experiences include the processes of investigating community needs, preparing for service, action, reflection, demonstration of learning and impacts, and celebration.
2. Service-learning is conducted during concentrated blocks of time across a period of several weeks or months.
3. Service-learning experiences provide enough time to address identified community needs and achieve learning outcomes.

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Establishing Curricular Connections: Points of Entry

1. **Identify an existing program or activity to transform into authentic service-learning.**

    - Identify an activity or project already existing on campus.

    - Examine it for learning opportunities.

    - Exchange resources and ideas with teachers, students, and community partners.

    Examples: Canned Food Drive
    Before students began bringing in cans of food, teachers integrated meaningful academic activities related to the food drive in their class curriculum. Activities included studying nutrition, contacting the receiving agency to identify what foods were needed, visiting a food bank, encouraging student leadership in identifying the quality and kinds of foods to be provided (in partnership with the agency), having math students graph the food collected, reading books related to hunger and homelessness, and demonstrating to other schools how to connect the canned food drive to academics.

    Bookshelf suggestions: *The Can-Do thanksgiving, Soul Moon Soup,* and *The Other America*

2. **Begin with standard curriculum, content, and skills, and find the natural extension into service.**

    - Identify the specific content and skill areas to be addressed.

    - Select an area of emphasis that supports or adds to classroom learning and addresses learning objectives or state standards.

    - Look for additional learning opportunities in other subject areas.

    Example: Learning History through Discussion with Elder Partners
    Teachers wanted students to be better informed about current events and to improve their listening and communication skills. This led to a partnership with a senior center and weekly interactions between students and older adults. Activities included studying recent historical events; learning about aging; practicing interviewing skills; interviewing older people to learn about their knowledge and experiences; collaborating on articles, stories, and photo essays; and displaying the results in the school and public library.

Bookshelf suggestions: *Stranger in the Mirror, Growing Older,* and *We Were There, Too! Young People in U.S. History*

Establishing Curricular Connections: Points of Entry (Continued)

3. **From a theme or unit of study, identify content and skill connections.**

- Begin with a broad theme or topic, often with obvious service implications.

- Identify specific content and skill areas.

- Select a service application.

Example: The Individual's Role in Society
As teachers identified ways for students to learn about the individual's role in society, they encouraged students to consider how they could participate in social action. Curriculum included reading nonfiction stories of contributions made by adults and young people to their communities, researching the needs of local agencies, providing regular assistance to one of the agencies, and publishing an informative pamphlet on the agency for young people.

Bookshelf suggestions: *Sisters in Strength: American Women Who Made a difference, Generation Fix,* and *Free the children: A Young Man's Personal Crusade Against Child Labor.*

4. **Start with a student-identified need.**

- Identify student skills, talents, and interests.

- Students define a problem, a need, and solutions.

- Students lead implementation as teacher facilitates, adding learning opportunities.

Example: transform an Empty Lot into a Community Garden
At the beginning of a class, a student initiated a conversation about starting a community garden in an empty lot near the school. The teacher guided the students in identifying a local government agency to contact about the property, conducting Internet research to find funding sources, partnering with special needs youth at the school to plant and maintain the garden, and donating the harvest to a local shelter.

Bookshelf suggestions: *Seedfolks, Just Kids: Visiting a Class for Children with Special Needs,* and *A Kid's Guide to Social Action.*

5. **Start with a community-identified need.**

- Community requests assistance, perhaps through an agency that has worked with the school before.

Establishing Curricular Connections: Points of Entry (Continued)

- Teacher, students, and community partners identify learning opportunities.

Example: Tutoring/literacy

A school received a flyer inviting the students to participate in a city-wide book collection to benefit local youth service agencies and organizations. Teachers in several grades collaborated on cross-age projects in which older students helped younger children to write and illustrate bilingual books on mutually agreed-on themes. The books were donated to libraries, hospitals, and day-care facilities; and student representatives served on a city committee regarding literacy.

Bookshelf suggestions: *La Mariposa, Just Juice,* and *Thank You, Mr. Falker*

❑ From *The Complete Guide to Service-learning: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum & Social Action* by Cathryn Berger Kaye, M.A...

_____ **Across the Curriculum**

English/Language Arts	Social Studies/History	Languages
Theater, Music, & Visual Arts	**Topic or Theme:**	**Math**
Physical Education	**Computer**	**Science**

Elders Across the Curriculum

English/Language Arts	Social Studies/History	Languages
• Discuss: Why should younger people care about elders? • Take dictation and compose letters and other correspondence for elders • Read and discuss a classic text with an elder partner	• Learn about Medicare, social security, and Medicaid • Establish a current events discussion group with elders at a senior center • Conduct interviews with older people about community history or significant historical events	• Contact senior centers to find elders who are fluent in the language being studied to visit and speak with the class • Compare how elders are regarded by different cultures and countries • Learn about colloquial expressions or proverbs used by elders in the language
Theater, Music, & Visual Arts • Create a dramatic reading of passages written by people of all ages • Learn and perform music enjoyed by a previous generation • Study and learn to do folk or traditional arts from your community or region	**Elders**	**Math** • Find out and graph statistics on the population of your region by age • Learn about tax forms and help prepare tax returns for elders • Create a "true or false" survey about elders and find out peer group opinions; create a statistical report and use this to teach others
Physical Education • Learn and teach armchair exercises • Research athletic programs and competitions for elders; observe and cheer participants • Arrange for an intergenerational athletic or exercise experience	**Computer** • Document elders' memories, pictures, and stories on a Web page • Conduct Internet research on careers in gerontology and geriatrics • Survey seniors about their attitudes toward and their uses of technology	**Science** • Educate elder people about nutrition • Study health care and dietary needs of elders; compare with those of youth • Plan ahead and grow corsage flowers for a "senior senior" prom

Continuum for Service-Learning Engagement

Learn and Serve Idaho

Complete each box with strategies for moving each group from *awareness to investment* in service-learning.

	Awareness *"heard it"* *Heard the term service-learning and have a basic concept of what it is; may be familiar with a specific service-learning project or program.*	Understanding *"get it"* *Understands the basic components of quality service-learning (e. g., curricular integration, meets real need, youth voice) and the steps it takes to implement it in school or out-of-school settings.*	Commitment *"do it"* *Strongly supports service-learning (e.g., principal allows teachers to do it; educator allows youth to do it), and may utilize service-learning already or have plans to use it.*	Investment *"spread it"* *Educated about, and dedicated to service-learning (sl) and supports it through direct means such as funding, time, resources, and educating others about it (e.g., youth train teachers; educators engage youth in quality sl on a regular basis; sl part of school goals).*
Youth				
Educators (teachers, staff, curriculum specialists, community educators)				
Administrators (principals, supers, school boards, agency directors and boards)				
Community (parents, business, agencies, government)				
Policy makers (school board members, city council, etc.)				

COMMUNITY CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of agency: _____

Key individual: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Location (note proximity to school):

Service needs (note ongoing versus short-term):

Learning opportunities:

_____

Date contact made: _____

Contact made by: _____

Follow-up information (record all calls, visits, etc.; continue on back or new sheet as necessary):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Community Response Form

Name of agency: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Contact person: _____

Teacher/class: _____

Date of visit: _____

Purpose of visit: _____

Please respond to the following questions to help us learn from today's service experience and better meet your agency's needs in the future.

What were the benefits of today's experience for your agency?

What suggestions do you have for future visits or interactions?

What service needs do you have that our school could assist with in the future?

What did you and others at your agency learn about children and our school that you did not know before?

Additional comments are most appreciated.

Thank you! Please return this form to the teacher listed above at the following address:

Planning for Service Learning

Grade level:_____

SERVICE EXPERIENCE THEME:

CONTENT—LEARNING ABOUT:

SERVICE NEED:

SERVICE IDEA:

PREPARATION:

ACTION:

REFLECTION:

DEMONSTRATION:

YOUTH VOICE and CHOICE:

TIMELINE:

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS:

❑ *English/Language Arts:*

❑ *Social Studies/History:*

❑ *Mathematics:*

❑ *Science:*

❑ *Languages:*

❑ *Art and Music:*

❑ *Other:*

SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

BOOKS:

COMMUNITY CONTACTS:

NOTES:

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Planning for Service Learning: *Example*
Elementary, The Environment

Grade level: **3**

CONTENT—LEARNING ABOUT:

- Ecology
- Composting
- Waste reduction
- Recycling

SERVICE NEED: There is too much waste in our community that could be recycled. If the students and community are informed on options about composting, they can choose to participate.

SERVICE IDEA: Give It to the Worms
Promote composting at school and in the community.

PREPARATION: Study ecosystems, hear guest speaker from Integrative Waste Management Board, create school map and chart to record waste quantities and reduction, prepare video presentation and talk on ecology and school waste management.

ACTION: Install compost and worm bins, monitor school food waste, donate soil from compost to school garden and nearby senior living community (gardening by elder residents), host parent information night with site tour and composting lesson.

REFLECTION: Make journals out of recycled paper at school with regular entries, weekly meetings to discuss and review project success, annual discussion and review of progress with partners at IWMB (Integrative Waste Management Board).

DEMONSTRATION: Distribute monthly copies of newsletter "Warm Ways" to school community, participate in Chinese New Year parade as a giant worm while handing out informational pamphlets on worm bins and composting called "Give It to the Worms!"

YOUTH VOICE and CHOICE: Since the project is ongoing, each year students add a new component based on their ideas (for example, making journals, being worm in parade).

NOTES: This activity started on a small scale with one teacher and grew to involve more. This plan shows what evolved over four years.

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS:

- *English/Language Arts:* Design a campaign to promote use of school composting and reduce waste at school, write video script, write letter to parents describing project, write "Warm Ways" newsletter, plan and write "Give It to the Worms" brochure
- *Social Studies/History:* Study Rachel Carson
- *Mathematics:* Graph waste quantities
- *Science:* Study life cycles; review ecosystems, waste reduction, and composting; maintain compost and worm bin with signage written by children
- *Languages:* Spanish-language signs by compost and worm bin
- *Art and Music:* Design poster campaign
- *Other:* Video and computer technology

SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

- Paragraph construction
- Graphing
- Time management

BOOKS:

Compost Critters

I Want to Be an Environmentalist

Compost! Growing Gardens from Your Garbage

You Are the Earth: Know the Planet So You Can Make It Better

Rachel Carson

COMMUNITY CONTACTS:

Integrative Waste Management Board

Chinese New Year Planning Committee

Taking Action in Our Community

Step 1: **Think about the needs in our community.** Make a list.

Step 2: **Identify what you know.**
- Select one community need:
- What is the cause?
- Who is helping?
- What are some ways we can help?

Step 3: **Find out more.**
- What do we need to know about this community need and who is helping?

- How can we find out?

Step 4: **Plan for action.**
- To help our community, we will:

- To make this happen, we will take on these responsibilities:

Who	Will do What	By When	Resources Needed

Overview

1.What unit or <u>content area</u> will you integrate service-learning into? How will service-learning be used to teach content and skills? (List specific Content Standards and Grade-level Benchmarks, e.g., specific math skills to build garden; firm grasp of literacy content in order to tutor younger children; knowledge of social, political, economic factors that contribute to homelessness)

2. What real <u>community need(s</u>) are being addressed? (What process will you use to ensure needs are identified and not just assumed?)

3. How will you ensure that <u>students take leadership</u> roles in the project? What might some of those roles be?

4. What kinds of preparation will students need to carry out the project successfully? What skills and knowledge will they need?

Outcomes
(What you hope will happen)

Service Goals	Proof
What do you hope to accomplish?	**What proof will you have of accomplishments?**

Learning Goals	Proof
I. Academic Goals (skills, content, standards)	**How will you document what was learned?**
II. Social Learning Goals (e.g. collaboration, group problem solving, knowledge of community and your role as citizens)	
III. Personal Learning Goals (e.g., responsibility, job skills, self-esteem, better attendance at school, motivation)	

Timeline – Learn and Serve Idaho

To help things go smoothly, be sure to plan what will actually happen, when, and by whom. This will avoid confusion later.

What? (What activities will take place?)	Who? (Who will organize and participate in them?)	When? (When will these activities take place?)

We, the undersigned agree to the tentative ACTION PLAN discussed above.

Signatures   **Date**

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Service-Learning Recording Sheet
Learn and Serve Idaho

Name of Service-Learning Group/Project: _____

Name (of the person doing the service-learning)	Date	Time Spent (in hours)	Recipient(s) of services	What was accomplished?

Sequence for Reflection

Use this document as a checklist and to record your own reflections.

In Preparation
As the service learning process begins, find out what students know: What beliefs and assumptions are already in place? Where and how were they learned? What do students expect to happen? What do they expect to learn, and how do they expect to feel? Depending on the situation, you may give students a thought or question to take with them into the service experience. This may encourage them to be more observant or heighten their awareness of a particular need or action being taken.
   What happened:

During Action
Be observant. What are the students paying attention to? What comments do you overhear? What behaviors do you see? You may make notes and refer to them later, during the reflection that follows the service. During on-the-spot reflection, students sometimes have insights or make recommendations that improve their experience and the impact of their contributions.
   What happened:

Following Service
Vary the reflection methods. As students become more adept, ask them to design a reflection process for themselves and their classmates. Before discussing the service, ask students to first write their responses to discussion prompts. This can protect the integrity of each student's experience and assure that everyone has something to contribute. Have students draw upon their reflections during demonstration of their service learning.
   What happened:

Feedback
Provide *nonjudgmental* feedback. If you may read journals, ask if you can write a response in the journal or on an attached piece of paper. Listen well. Ask questions. Appreciate what is being revealed and discovered.
   What happened:

Four Square Reflection Tool

WHAT HAPPENED?	HOW DO I FEEL?

IDEAS?	QUESTIONS?

Service-Learning Rubric

Note to Students: Service-Learning is a teaching method that combines academic instruction, meaningful service, and critical reflective thinking to enhance student learning and civic responsibility. Use this rubric to evaluate your progress during your service-learning project, and once you've completed it.

	Strong Impact	**Good Impact**	**Some Impact**	**Minimal Impact**
1. Meet actual community needs	Determined by current research conducted or discovered by students with teacher assistance where appropriate	Determined by past research discovered by students with teacher assistance where appropriate	Determined by making a guess at what community needs may be	Community needs secondary to what a project teacher wants to do; project considers only student needs
2. Are coordinated in collaboration with community	Active, direct collaboration with community by the teacher and/or student	Community members act as consultant in the project development	Community members are informed of the project directly	Community members are coincidentally informed or not knowledgeable at all
3. Are integrated into academic curriculum	Service-learning as instructional strategy with content/service components integrated	Service-learning as a teaching technique with content/service components concurrent	Service-learning part of curriculum but sketchy connections, with emphasis on service	Service-learning supplemental to curriculum, in essence just a service project or good deed
4. Facilitate active student reflection	Students think, share, produce reflective products individually and as group members	Students think, share, produce group reflection only	Students share, With no individual reflective projects	Ran out of time for a true reflection; just provided a summary of events
5. Use new academic skill/knowledge in real world settings	All students have direct application of new skill or knowledge in community service	All students have some active application of new skill or knowledge	Some students more involved than others or little community service involvement	Skill knowledge used mostly in the classroom; no active community service experience
6. Help develop sense of caring for and about others	Reflections show affective growth regarding self in community and the importance of service	Reflections show generic growth regarding the importance of community service	Reflections restricted to pros and cons of particular service project regarding the community	Reflections limited to self-centered pros and cons of the service project
7. Improve quality of life for person(s) serviced	Facilitate change or insight; help alleviate a suffering; solve a problem; meet a need or address an issue	Changes enhance an already good community situation	Changes mainly decorative, but new and unique benefits realized in the community	Changes mainly decorative, but limited community benefit, or are not new and unique

Service-learning Pre/Post Assessment

Teachers: complete the top box before handing it out to students. Students complete the assessment <u>before</u> and <u>after</u> the service-learning unit (younger students may dictate answers).

Teacher: **Class:**	**Unit:**
Date:	**Service-Learning Activity:**
Skill or Concept:	**Benchmark:**

Student's Name:

What does _____ mean?

_____

_____

_____

How do you know?

_____

_____

Can you draw it or write it with symbols?

SAMPLE

Service-learning Pre/Post Assessment

Teachers: complete the top box before handing it out to students. Students complete the assessment <u>before</u> and after the service-learning unit (younger students may dictate answers).

Teacher: Mrs. White **Class:** 2nd Grade	**Unit:** Hunger and Homelessness
Date: September 26, 2007	**Service-Learning Activity:** Grow a vegetable garden and donate vegetables to local food bank
Skill or Concept: Be able to define "home" and its attributes; contrast with "homelessness"	**Benchmark:** Understand causes of poverty and homelessness

Student's Name:

What does <u>HUNGER</u>_____ mean?

How do you know?

Can you draw it or write it with symbols?

Service-Learning Post-Assessment Reflection

Teachers: At end of unit or activity have students fill out page one again and then this page.

Look at what you wrote the first time you filled out this sheet.
How did your ideas about _____ change?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What activities did you do or what things did you read that helped you change your ideas about _____?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Did doing *service-learning* through the _____ project help you understand _____ better? Please explain.

_____

_____

_____

Assessment for Service Learning: *Part One*

Service Learning Project: _____

Respond to the questions that are relevant to your service learning activities.

Student Learning

• Were the defined content and skill objectives met?

• Were there any unforeseen outcomes?

• Did students show initiative or develop leadership skills?

• Were students able to reflect and place their experience in the larger context of community or society in general?

• Could students identify both their cognitive and affective growth?

Impact of the Service

• Were students able to explicitly state the need and purpose for their service efforts?

• What contribution was made?

• How did the service help or hinder community improvement efforts?

• Is the partner agency satisfied with the interaction?

• Have new relationships been formed?

• Were planned service programs, activities, or products completed?

Process

• How did this project affect or change how teachers teach and how children learn?

• How effective was project planning?

• What are your ideas for overall improvement?

• In future activities, how can students take greater ownership?

• How can community partnerships be improved or strengthened?

Assessment for Service Learning: *Part Two*

Service Learning Project: _____

Identify what methods were used for each stage and whether each element was present.

Stages of Service Learning

Preparation

- Research

- Literature

- Field trips

- Interviews

- Other:

Action

- Direct service

- Indirect service

- Research

- Advocacy

Reflection

- Discussion

- Journals

- Role play

- Other:

Demonstration

- Presentation

- Performance

- Article

- Other:

Elements of Service Learning

- **Integrated learning**
  Example of curricular connections:

- **Meeting genuine needs**
  Example of students verifying need:

- **Youth voice and choice**
  Example of student responsibility and decision making:

- **Collaborative efforts**
  Example of partnership/shared responsibility:

- **Reciprocity**
  Example of reciprocity in relationships between persons and between institutions:

- **Civic responsibility**
  Example of students' increased awareness of their role in community improvement and/or students' knowledge of civic institutions:

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